



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

8 SEPTEMBER 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am

- Present:
- Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
 - Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
 - Mr Steven Agnew
 - Mr Adrian Cochrane-Watson
 - Mr Gordon Dunne
 - Ms Megan Fearon
 - Mr Paul Frew
 - Mr Paul Givan
 - Mr William Humphrey
 - Mr Fearghal McKinney
 - Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
- In Attendance:
- Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
 - Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: No apologies were recorded.

The meeting began at 10:17am

1. Apologies

No apologies were recorded.

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 30 June 2015 & 9 July 2015

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 30 June 2015 and 9 July 2015

3. Oral Briefing from DETI: SL1 Proposed Renewables Obligation Closure Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Officials joined the meeting at 10:19am

Members received a briefing from Mr John Mills, Head of Energy Division, DETI, Ms Alison Clydesdale, Principal Officer, Renewable Energy Branch, DETI and Mr Michael Harris, Deputy Principal DETI.

The key issues of the SL1 were discussed as well as previous evidence given to the Committee from Department Officials and the Utility Regulator on the SL1.

Adrian Cochrane-Watson joined the meeting at 10:24am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir joined the meeting at 10:29am

Gordon Dunne joined the meeting at 10:40am

Megan Fearon joined the meeting at 11:12am

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy proposals at this stage.

Agreed: The Department Officials agreed to forward the Committee: an estimate of the number of renewable energy small scale connections between now and 2015; information in relation to the level of risk associated with current preparations in relation to state aid; and clarification on the nature of the legal advice sought by the Department both before and after the oral briefing on 9 July.

Agreed: to write to the Utility Regulator asking it to clarify its position regarding legislation on wind energy and the impact in the long term on customers' bills.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:34am

4. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed members that he has been invited to speak and participate in the annual 'Science and Stormont' event on 12 October 2015. The theme for this year's event is 'Energy and the Environment'.

Agreed: that members are content that the Chairperson will participate in the event.

The Chairperson informed members that he had received an invitation to a 'Fighting Fraud' conference hosted by the Ulster Bank on 6th October 2015.

Agreed: that members are content that the Chairperson will decline this invitation due to both Committee and Plenary commitments.

5. Matters Arising

Members considered a response from the Ofcom Director in relation to users in Northern Ireland accessing content from the RTÉ and TG4 online player services.

Agreed: that Assembly Research provide background information on Internet Service Providers available in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: that the Committee obtain the views of relevant broadcasters on geolocation options.

Members noted a response from the Utility Regulator on the Committee's request for information regarding imperfection charges.

Members considered a response from the Department regarding SONI's Board Minutes.

Agreed: that, as the response does not provide the Department's view, to ask the Department again for its view on the matter.

Members considered a Departmental response regarding funding for Advice NI Debtline.

Agreed: to forward this response and that of 25 June 2015 to Advice NI for comment.

Members considered a Departmental response to the Committee's queries in regards to the Consumer Council's written briefing on online parcel deliveries to Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to forward the response to the Consumer Council.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) acknowledging the Committee's response to its report on a return visit from Stuttgart Region.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in regards to regular updates from the ONIEB.

6. Legislation: SL1 The Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Amendment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Members considered the SL1 the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Amendment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy proposals at this stage.

7. Legislation: SR 2015/325 The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (NI) 2015

Members discussed the SR 2015/325 The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: that the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has considered SR2015/325 the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Report, has no objection to the rule.

8. Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill

Members discussed the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill and its options regarding Clause 1.

Agreed: the Committee to seek further information from the Department in relation to Clause 1 of the Bill.

9. Report on The Future of Early Stage and Growth Finance in Northern Ireland

Members noted the report 'The Future of Early Stage and Growth Finance in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Committee will review the report again when the Economic Advisory Group briefs the Committee.

10. Written Briefing from DETI: DETI Business Plan 2014/15 Summary of Year End Performance

Members noted the DETI Business Plan 2014/15 Summary of Year End Performance.

Agreed: the Committee to seek further information regarding projects which have a target status of red for A2 and A8 in the report.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 12:02pm

11. Written Briefing from DETI: Resource Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

Members noted a written briefing from the Department in relation to the Resource Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015.

12. Written Briefing from Invest NI: EU R&D Liaison Service Brussels Bulletin

Members noted Invest NI's EU R&D Liaison Service Brussels Bulletin.

Members noted that a link to Invest NI's Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15 was sent to members.

13. Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation Resource Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

Members noted the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation Resource Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2015.

14. Public Accounts Committee Report on the Cross-border Broadband Initiative: the Bytel project

Members noted the Public Accounts Committee Report on the Cross-border broadband initiative: the Bytel project.

15. Correspondence

Members considered the following items of correspondence.

- i. Correspondence from an individual regarding countryside access.

Agreed: to share this correspondence with the Environment Committee.

- ii. An invitation to the Committee to an informal meeting with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on Thursday 24th September 2015.

- iii. Correspondence from the Minister in relation to Horizon 2020.

Agreed: that the Committee is briefed on the emerging findings of the Review before the end of the current session.

Members noted the following items of correspondence.

- iv. Correspondence from the Minister regarding the DETI Business Plan Year-end Outturn Figures against Targets.

- v. A copy of correspondence from the Department to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in response to a query on Better Regulation.
- vi. Correspondence from the Department on the Performance Monitoring March 2015.
- vii. Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) on the Executive's EU priorities.
- viii. Correspondence from the COFMDFM on the Inquiry into Building a United Community.
- ix. Enterprise NI's Social Enterprise Report.
- x. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in relation to a Report on 'Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector'.
- xi. Ofcom's 'Digital Communications Review' report.
- xii. An Assembly Research paper on 'Departmental Financial Forecasting' from the COFMDFM.
- xiii. A copy of an invite to Departmental Officials to give written and oral evidence to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development on the Inquiry into Better Regulation and the Farming Industry.

16. Forward Work Programme

Members agreed the Forward Work Programme for September to December 2015.

17. Any Other Business

There were no additional items of business.

18. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Tuesday 22 September 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.**

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.08pm

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

29 September 2015